



A Streetcar Named Desire Tennessee Williams American 1947

“When I write I don't aim to shock people, and I'm surprised when I do. But I don't think that anything that occurs in life should be omitted from art, though the artist should present it in a fashion that is artistic and not ugly. I set out to tell the truth. And sometimes the truth is shocking.”

Scene

The exterior of a two-story corner building on a street in New Orleans which is named Elysian Fields and runs between the L & N tracks and the river. The section is poor but, unlike corresponding section in other American cities, it has a raffish charm. The houses are mostly white frame, weathered grey, with rickety outside stairs and galleries and quaintly ornamented gables. This building contains two flats, upstairs and down. Faded white stairs ascend to the entrances of both.

It is first dark of an evening early in May. The sky that shows around the dim white building is a peculiarly tender blue, almost a turquoise, which invests the scene with a kind of lyricism and gracefully attenuates the atmosphere of decay. You can almost feel the warm breath of the brown river beyond the river warehouses with their faint redolences of bananas and coffee. A corresponding air is evoked by the music of Negro entertainers at a barroom around the corner. In this part of New Orleans you are practically always just around the corner, or a few doors down the street, from a tinny piano being played with the infatuated fluency of brown fingers. This “Blue Piano” expresses the spirit of the life which goes on here.











Epigraph

*And so it was I entered the broken world
To trace the visionary company of love, its voice
An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)
But not for long to hold each desperate choice.*

“The Broken Tower” by Hart Crane

Streetcar Named Desire - Vocabulary

incongruous (adj) - clashing or not in harmony with the surroundings

dubiously (adv) - to act in a doubting manner

uncouth (adj) - lacking good manners, refinement, or grace

coquettishly (adj) - to act in a flirtatious manner

demureness (noun) - the quality of being reserved, modest, and shy

distort (verb) - to pull or twist out of shape

effeminate (adj) - having or showing characteristics regarded as typical of a woman; unmanly.

deluded (adj) - to possess a misleading or incorrect understanding

recrimination (noun) - an accusation in response to one made at you

trepidation (noun) - a feeling of fear or agitation about something that may happen

deferential (adj) - showing deference or submission; respectful

lurid (adj) - very vivid in color, esp. so as to create an unpleasantly harsh or unnatural effect